

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for the
**RAND RECREATION SITE
VAULT TOILET INSTALLATION PROJECT**

EA #OR117- 05-05

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA

March 2005

Dear Reader:

We appreciate your interest in the BLM's public land management activities. We also appreciate your taking the time to review this environmental assessment (EA). If you would like to provide us with written comments regarding this project or EA, please send them to Abbie Jossie, Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504 or email them to or110mb@or.blm.gov.

If you would like to comment confidentially, please be aware that comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review or may be held in a file available for public inspection and review unless you request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this clearly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

I look forward to your continued interest in the management of our public lands.

Abbie Jossie
Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

EA COVER SHEET

RESOURCE AREA: Grants Pass

EA Number OR-110-05-05

ACTION/TITLE: Recreation Site Vault Toilet Installation Project

LOCATIONS: Rand Recreation Site

T34S, R8W, SE ¼, Sec. 24

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1.0 Introduction

This environmental assessment (EA) will assist in the decision-making process by assessing the environmental and human effects resulting from implementing the proposed project or alternatives. The EA will also assist in determining if an environmental impact statement (EIS) needs to be prepared or if a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

This EA tiers to or is consistent with the following documents:

1. *Final EIS and ROD for the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP)* (June 1995);
2. *Final Supplemental EIS on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (February 1994) and the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and its attachment *A Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (NFP)*(April 1994);
3. *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (March 2000), and the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (January 2001);
4. *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to remove or Modify the survey and Manage Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (January 2004) and the *Record of Decision to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Document within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. (March 2004);
5. *Record of Decision and Resource Plan Amendment for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts* (May 2004) and the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon* (January 2004);
6. *Final Supplemental EIS for Clarification of Language in the 1994 Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Districts Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl: Proposal to Amend Wording about the Aquatic Conservation Strategy* (October 2003), and the *Record of Decision Amending Resource Management Plans for Seven Bureau of Land Management Districts and Land and Resource Management Plans for Nineteen National Forests Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl: Decision to Clarify Provisions Relating to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy* (March 2004); and
7. *Rogue National Wild and Scenic River: Hellgate Recreation Area. Proposed Area Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (March 2003) and the *Record of Decision and Management Plan* (July 2004).

1.1 Purpose of and Need for Action

With an increase in recreational use at recreation sites along the Rogue River, there is a need to provide adequate toilet facilities at popular day use and unimproved camping areas. The current toilet at the Rand recreation site is a culvert lined pit toilet in a wooden building. It does not meet accessibility standards. The wood floor is prone to rot and requires replacement approximately every five years. The pit allows sewage to leach into the ground water.

The purpose of the project is to install a vault toilet at the Rand recreation site that meets public health considerations, is vandal resistant and meets current accessibility standards. The vault toilet would be similar to toilet facilities at other BLM and county sites along the Rogue River.

1.2 Project Location

The Rand Recreation Site site is within the Hellgate recreation section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River corridor (See Appendix A, Vicinity Map).

1.3 Scoping Issues

Several issues were raised by the BLM's interdisciplinary team during project planning.

- Need for a design that is consistent with the VRM objectives.
- Toilet design must meet all requirements specified in the accessibility standards and guidelines (UFAS/ADAAG), and is vandal resistant.
- Potential impact on the riparian system.

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Alternative 1: No Action

This alternative would retain the existing pit toilet facility at the Rand Recreation Site.

2.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed action is to remove the current toilet facility at Rand Recreation Site and replace it with a concrete vault toilet at a different spot farther up the hill and away from the river. The design and earth tone color of this facility will be similar to vault toilets at other BLM and county recreation sites in the recreation section of the Rogue River. The design will be vandal resistant and meet current ADA accessibility standards and guidelines.

Vault excavation would be 5' deep, 8.5' wide and 17' long using a backhoe. Excavated soil would be used to backfill around the vault. Excess soil would be removed from the site. A gravel path will be developed to provide an accessible route from the existing parking areas to the toilet. A cultural resources technician would be present during excavation. Bollards or barrier posts will be installed around the facilities to guard against vehicular damage.

The new structure will be placed uphill from the old toilet's location and adjacent to the existing paved parking area (See Map 1). Sludge in the existing toilet facility would be pumped out prior to filling in the hole with material excavated from the new location.

3.0 Environmental Consequences

Only substantive site-specific environmental changes that would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives are discussed in this section. If an ecological component is not discussed, it should be assumed that resource specialists have considered effects to that component and found that the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no effects. Similarly, unless addressed specifically the following were found not to be affected: air quality, areas of critical environmental concerns (ACEC); cultural or historical resources; Native American religious sites; prime or unique farmlands; flood plains; endangered, threatened or sensitive plant, animal or fish species; water quality; wetlands/riparian zones; wild and scenic rivers; and wilderness areas.

3.1 Soils and Hydrology

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The toilet site at the Rand location is within the 100-year flood plain.

3.1.2 Alternative 1: No Action

The existing pit toilet at Rand Recreation Site would continue to contaminate alluvium and ground water. The ground water contamination occurs when the water table rises to a high enough point to come in contact with effluent that seeps through voids in the alluvium.

3.1.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The concrete vault walls will isolate sewage effluent from alluvium and ground water. There would be no further contamination.

3.2 Botany and Weeds

3.2.1 Affected Environment

The project site is heavily disturbed by human impacts. It does not provide habitat suitable for special status or TES species.

3.2.2 Alternative 1: No Action

No activity would occur and there would be no change in the botanical resources.

3.2.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Since the project sites are highly disturbed and compacted and does not provide habitat suitable for special status or ESA listed species, there would be no effect to these species.

The potential to spread noxious weeds is negligible because of the small area of ground disturbance; 5' deep, 8.5' wide and 17' long.

3.3 Wildlife

3.3.1 Affected Environment

There are no known listed threatened or endangered (T&E) wildlife species in or adjacent to the project sites. No bald eagle nesting sites are near the proposed project sites. Spotted owl dispersal habitat is adjacent to the project area. There are historically active osprey and great blue heron nest sites in the vicinity of the Rand site, but there are no active nests within the two project areas. Blackberries, junipers, ferns, and small madrone, alder, and Douglas-fir trees vegetate the project site.

3.3.2 Alternative 1: No Action

Vegetation conditions would remain the same and no habitat modification would occur. There would be no effects to T&E, or special status wildlife species.

3.3.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

No effects are anticipated to T&E species since there are no known T&E species in or adjacent to the project area and no T&E species habitat would be removed as a result of this project. Minimal new ground disturbance would occur. There may be short term disturbance to nesting neotropical birds, but nesting or breeding success would not likely be impacted. The proposed action would not affect long term population viability of any species known to be in the area or lead to the need to list sensitive wildlife species due to the negligible habitat modification that would occur. The site is within a designated spotted owl critical habitat area but it will not alter spotted owl habitat conditions.

3.4 Fisheries

3.4.1 Affected Environment

The sites are adjacent (within the 100 year flood event plain) of the Rogue River. Fish species present in the Rogue River include fall and spring chinook, coho, winter and summer steelhead, Pacific lamprey, Klamath small scale sucker, speckled dace, and sculpin species. One of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Rogue Wild and Scenic River is its fisheries.

3.4.2 Alternative 1: No Action

Under the no action alternative fisheries conditions in the Rogue River would remain at present conditions.

3.4.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

No effects to fisheries or aquatic resources are anticipated from the Proposed Action due to 1) the lack of mechanisms for sediment to be transported to the Rogue River and 2) no removal of vegetation. This determination includes short and long term direct and indirect and cumulative effects. Impacts have been considered temporarily on the short and long term scales, and spatially at the project and watershed scales.

The proposed action would not have any effect on the Fisheries Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) in the Rogue River or coho salmon including coho critical habitat due to due to the lack of mechanisms that might impact fish such as excavated sediment being transported to the Rogue River or extensive removal of vegetation.

3.5 Recreation and Visual Resource Management (VRM)

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The Rogue National Wild and Scenic River is classified as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I (USDI, RMP 1995). The outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) are: natural scenic quality, fisheries, and recreational opportunities (USDI, RAMP 2004).

3.5.2 Alternative 1: No Action

The existing facility at Rand would continue to: a) not meet accessibility standards, b) require frequent structural maintenance, c) allow sewage to leach into the ground water. Human waste problems at Carpenters Island recreation site would continue.

3.5.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The new structure at the Rand Recreation Site would be fully accessible and would be visually screened from the river by topography and vegetation. Short term impacts to low vegetation would occur during installation, but the vegetation would recover within one growing season. The Rand site will meet VRM Class I objectives and will not affect the natural scenic quality ORV. The new structure enhances the recreational opportunities ORV by providing a modern, fully accessible toilet.

The proposal is consistent with the objectives for the “Roaded Natural” class (structures are visually subordinate, generally scattered) of the 1992 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Inventory for the recreation section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River.

3.6 Cultural Resources

3.6.1 Affected Environment

The proposed new vault toilet location within the Rand Recreation area is close to a recorded cultural site. The site is the location of an occupancy trespass on the McConnachie Placer, which was declared Null and Void in 1955. Fred W. Hansen, a WWI veteran, lived there and was given a life time lease by the federal government. The house was removed sometime in the late 1970's. All that remains is a refuse area and domestic vegetation consisting of juniper bushes.

3.6.2 Alternative 1: No Action

No ground disturbing activity would occur and there would be no affect to cultural resources.

3.6.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed area for the Rand toilets was surveyed by Lisa Brennan, GPRA archaeologist on January 3, 2005. No artifacts were located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The proposed action involves sub-surface digging to install a vault toilet in an area close to a recorded cultural site. During the excavation there is a potential for sub-surface artifacts to be disturbed. An archaeologist or cultural resource specialists will be on-site during excavation.

4.0 Agencies and Persons Consulted

4.1 Public Involvement

A scoping letter was mailed in February, 2002 to 40 interested individuals, groups, and agencies. One comment was received questioning the need for new pit toilets. This project proposal has been discussed with and reviewed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and has been coordinated with Josephine County Planning and Parks Departments.

4.2. Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

Copies of the EA will be available for public review in the BLM Medford District Office, the Greenfield Office in Grants Pass and online at www.or.blm.gov/Medford/planning. A formal 15-day public comment period will be held following an announcement in the Grants Pass Daily Courier. Written comments should be addressed to Abbie Jossie, Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area, at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504. E-mailed comments may be sent to or110mb@or.blm.gov.

5.0 Proposals Considered but Eliminated

Carpenters Island Recreation Site (T34S, R8W, SE ¼, SE ¼, Sec. 25) a popular fishing access and picnic area that is currently without toilet facilities. It was initially proposed to install a new concrete vault toilet similar to that described for the Rand Site. After review of the potential visual (VRM) impacts of doing this, it was determined that locating this type of structure at this site would result in a visual intrusion that would be inconsistent with the VRM I guidelines. Consequently the proposal was dropped from the present project to be considered at some future time after additional design work can be accomplished. The structure, while visually screened from the river by topography and vegetation, it would not meet VRM Class I objectives because the structure would be highly visible from the Merlin-Galice road.

Appendix A. Maps





Map 1. Rand Recreation Site - Vicinity Map

To I-5
17.6 miles

Rand Day Use Area



1/05

| | |
|---|----------------|
|  | Outhouse |
|  | Picnic Table |
|  | Trash Can |
|  | Picnic Shelter |

